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WANDERING JEW



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A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR OF

The Wandering Jew

EUGENE SUE

(1804-1857)

TIME and again physicians and seamen have made noteworthy reputations as novelists. But it is rare in the annals of literature that a man trained in both professions should have gained his greatest fame as a writer of novels. Eugene Sue began his career as a physician and surgeon, and then spent six years in the French Navy. In 1830, when he returned to France, he inherited his father's rich estate and was free to follow his inclination to write. His first novel, *Plick et Plock*, met with an unexpected success, and he at once foreswore the arts of healing and navigation for the precarious life of a man of letters. With varying success he produced books from his inexhaustible store of personal experiences as a doctor and sailor. In 1837, he wrote an authoritative work on the French Navy, *Histoire de la marine Française*.

More and more the novel appealed to his imagination and suited his gifts. His themes ranged from the fabulous to the strictly historical, and he became popular as a writer of romance and fictionized fact. His plays, however, were persistent failures. When he published *The Mysteries of Paris*, his national fame was assured, and with the writing of *The Wandering Jew* he achieved world-wide renown. Then, at the height of his literary career, Eugene Sue was driven into exile after Louis Napoleon overthrew the Constitutional Government in a *coup d'état* and had himself officially proclaimed Emperor Napoleon III. The author of *The Wandering Jew* died in banishment five years later.

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**THE
WANDERING JEW**

VOLUME ONE

THE WANDERING JEW.

FIRST PART.—THE TRANSGRESSION.

PROLOGUE.

THE LAND'S END OF TWO WORLDS.

THE Arctic Ocean encircles with a belt of eternal ice the desert confines of Siberia and North America—the uttermost limits of the Old and New worlds, separated by the narrow channel, known as Behring's Straits.

The last days of September have arrived.

The equinox has brought with it darkness and Northern storms, and night will quickly close the short and dismal polar day. The sky of a dull and leaden blue is faintly lighted by a sun without warmth, whose white disk, scarcely seen above the horizon, pales before the dazzling brilliancy of the snow that covers, as far as the eyes can reach, the boundless steppes.

To the North, this desert is bounded by a ragged coast, bristling with huge black rocks.

At the base of this Titanic mass lies enchained the petrified ocean, whose spell-bound waves appear fixed as vast ranges of ice mountains, their blue peaks fading away in the far-off frost smoke, or snow vapor.

Between the twin-peaks of Cape East, the termination of Siberia, the sullen sea is seen to drive tall icebergs across a streak of dead green. There lies Behring's Straits.

Opposite, and towering over the channel, rise the granite masses of Cape Prince of Wales, the headland of North America.

These lonely latitudes do not belong to the habitable world; for the piercing cold shivers the stones, splits the